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CITYWISE

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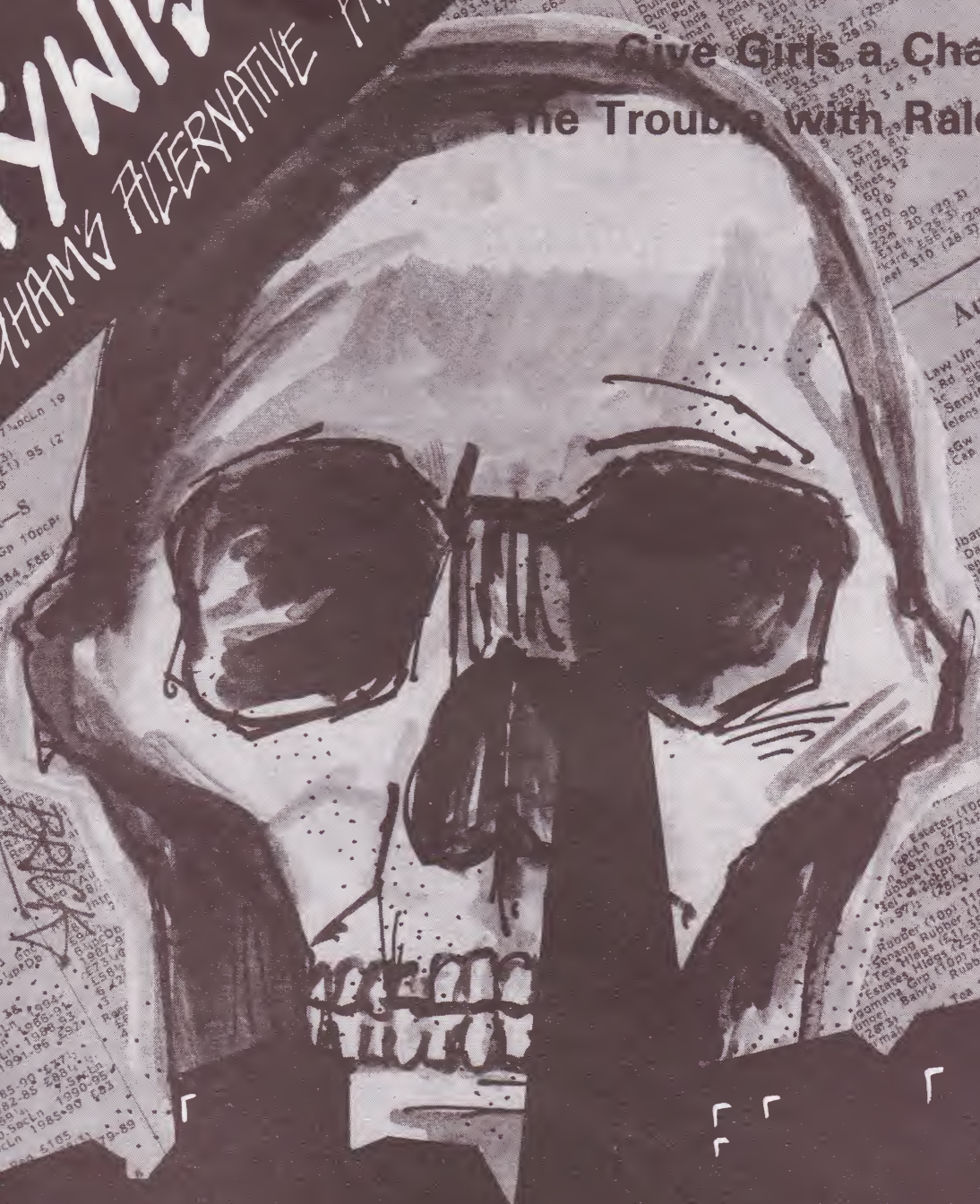
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INSIDE:

Gun Law in Notts

Give Girls a Chance

The Trouble with Raleigh



ASBESTOS - THE KILLER DUST

NOV-DEC

25p



CITYWISE

NOTTINGHAM'S ALTERNATIVE PAPER

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Next issue December 17th

Next open meeting 7.30 pm Monday 14th Nov.,
118 Mansfield Road.

contact **CITYWISE** c/o 118 Mansfield Rd.,
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JOB AT RISK IN LOCAL HOSPITALS

Over 1400 jobs at local hospitals, as well as the health of all patients, are threatened by a recent government circular. The circular insists that all health authorities must take steps to put laundry and cleaning services out to tender.

According to NUPE Branch Secretary, Shirley Bryant, over 200 jobs at Sherwood laundry, which serves many local hospitals, and some 430 cleaning jobs at the City and Sherwood 'campus' could be at risk, whilst NUPE steward Shirley Tacey says over 800 domestic jobs at the Queen's Medical are potentially threatened.

Privatisation threatens jobs in many ways. If a private company takes over, there is no guarantee of jobs for present workers. If they are taken on they face wage cuts, longer hours, a smaller workforce and worse working conditions.

In a bid to keep the jobs in the public sector, workers, unions and management are all tempted to reduce costs to try and win the contract. So the government hopes to win both ways.

Already low

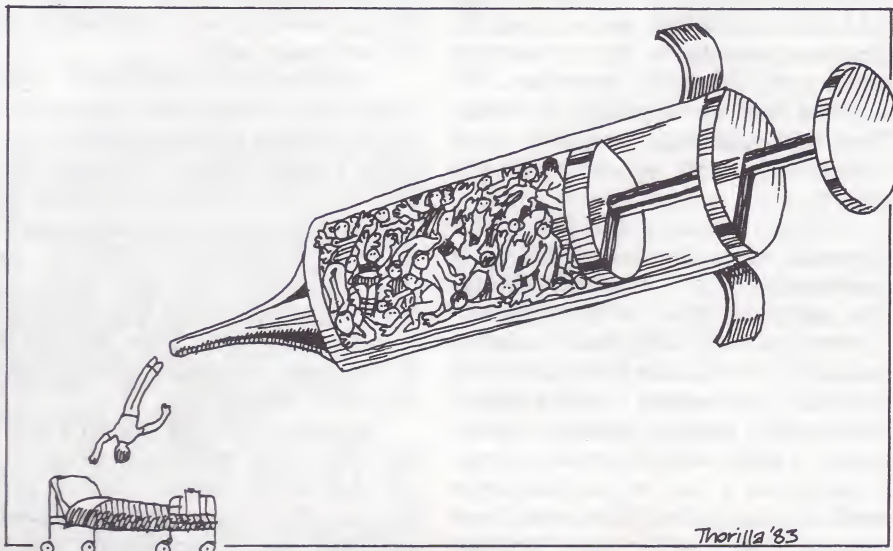
Wages are already very low in the health service. Shirley Bryant points out that cleaning rates are about £1.65 per hour.

What happens in the next few months will be crucial. Peter Rowe, NUPE full-timer responsible for NUPE members in the health service, says: 'We are looking, with shop stewards, at the practical aspect, at how the tender can be won by the present workers.'

'We also need a public campaign as well as joint action by workers within the health service. A co-ordinating committee is being set up in the Nottingham Health Authority area involving shop stewards and full-time officials as well as the professional organisations. Everybody realises what a threat privatisation is.'

Right now management are drawing up details of the tendering procedures. Yet how can you define standards and keep contractors to them?

'You can only define a standard when it's as good as it is now,' says Shirley Bryant. 'The Tories are trying



to dismantle the Health Service. Two years ago they produced a circular saying 'patients first' at the top. They ought to more honest now and put at the top: 'Profits first, patients last.'

Which firms are interested is a secret so far, but they seem likely to include:

Initial Cleaning Services. Sacked this year from a cattle market cleaning contract in Gloucester. The Environmental Health Department proposed closing the market down as the standards were so low.

Exclusive. Recently started a street cleaning contract in Milton Keynes. They sacked 63 former council

workers, now only 8 out of 74 taken on by Exclusive this April remain.

Pritchards. The leading 'privateer' who, amongst other penalties, face £84,000 fines for their grass cutting contract for Wandsworth Council - whilst they were still incurring 800 penalties a month this summer on their street cleaning contract in this borough.

Against this background, nobody can guarantee that our hospitals will stay clean if private companies are let in. So the only solution is to support the campaign to fight privatisation as well as to improve conditions and wages in the Health Service.

US OUT OF NATO!

'THE UNITED STATES is moving into the final stages of its plans to destroy the independent, democratic and pluralist government of Nicaragua.'

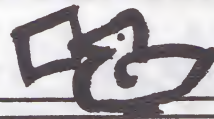
So wrote the Nottingham-based Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation on 17th October, just days before the US invasion of Grenada.

The Foundation pointed out that the US policies of aggression against Nicaragua are in total contradiction to Article 1 of the North Atlantic Treaty. They are writing to European peace movements and to socialist parties in

NATO countries asking them to call for the United States to be suspended from NATO.

The Grenadian invasion only underlines the need for public opinion to be mobilised very quickly against US aggression in Central America and the Caribbean before the whole area becomes a second Vietnam.

Donations to the campaign to defend Nicaragua should be sent to the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, Gamble Street, Nottingham.



Residential workers step up dispute

RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL workers in Nottinghamshire - members of NALGO and NUPE - are stepping up their campaign for a shorter working week and enhanced payments for weekend and bank holiday working. They are fighting alongside their colleagues in areas up and down the country.

Their action began on 12th September with a ban on admissions to homes and a ban on overtime working. The continued refusal of the employers to even negotiate on the claim has led to escalation of the action both locally and nationally. A weekend working ban in an increasing number of homes in the county is likely to be followed by sleep-in bans and a ban on administrative work. In other parts of the country, one day and all-out strikes have involved large numbers of residential workers and others in local government.

Stressful

Residential social workers are the people who staff local authority homes for children, the aged and the mentally handicapped. They often work under difficult and stressful conditions and most are on low pay. They are a caring group of workers who serve the community and have for years been exploited for doing so.

Nominally, residential workers work a 39 hour week - compared to the 37 hours of their colleagues on similar grades in local government. But inadequate staffing levels means that a 50 or 60 hour week is not uncommon in some homes. They receive no extra payment for long hours and working at weekends and on bank holidays.

The decision to take action followed an overwhelming vote in a national ballot. After 5 years of negotiating and getting nowhere, residential workers reluctantly came to the conclusion that the only way to achieve their objectives was to take action. The final insult came when the employers' side of the National Joint Council dismissed the claim as 'having no merits' and refused to negotiate further with the trade union side.

The national employers' side consists of representatives of all local authorities in England and Wales. Nottinghamshire County Council is the

local employer. The County Council has made several attempts to try and get the national employers' side back round the negotiating table.

Nonetheless, residential social workers have been bitterly disappointed by the attitudes of most members of the ruling Labour Group at County Hall. They feel that the group in general has no sympathy nor even an understanding of their grievances. Although the County Council has been active in trying to persuade other local employers to negotiate, they have refused to acknowledge the justice of their claim or even to talk about it.

In many ways, the County Council has adopted a traditional employer's approach to the dispute. Letters from the councillors and senior management have been sent to residential workers both before and during the dispute to try and dissuade staff from taking action.

Letters have been followed by personal visits by senior management to homes to bring pressure on staff not to abide by the results of their ballots and the consequent union instructions to ban weekend working. Threats to close

homes and transfer children are also being made - sprinkled liberally with emotional blackmail about 'harm to clients'.

Even before the dispute started, NALGO repeatedly urged management to employ sufficient temporary workers to provide cover for the ban on overtime working. Instead, heavy reliance has been placed on members of management and other County Council employees prepared to 'scab' on their colleagues in residential work.

The two Unions involved - NALGO and NUPE - have been working together at shop steward level. NALGO members have shown solidarity with their NUPE colleagues by offering to make NUPE strike pay up to the level of their colleagues in NALGO.

Messages of support have been flooding into the NALGO branch office from other trade unions and from Labour Party constituencies and branches. Messages and donations to the action fund should be sent to NALGO Branch Office, 41 Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

COMMUNITY PROJECT IN TROUBLE

NOTTINGHAM Community Project, the country's largest community work project, is in serious trouble. Following a detailed exposé in the national magazine 'Community Action', the management of the project has been thrown into turmoil.

Community groups who depend on the project have withdrawn their support from its management and are discussing how to campaign for changes. Several Labour Party branches have called for an inquiry, which has been backed by the County Council Labour Group. The Council's auditors have called in their lawyers to investigate the financial affairs of the project.

But the County Council bureaucracy is fighting back. A massive cover-up is already under way. Everyone who has criticised the project is being systematically leant on:

Six workers on the project, who refused to sign a management statement denouncing the Community Action article, have been called in to explain their disloyalty.

The management of the Community Relations Council have been asked to take action against two of their officers who publicly criticised the decision of the project's management not to work on race issues, even though they were working in multiracial areas.

County Council social workers who criticised the management of the project earlier this year were told in no uncertain terms that this sort of disloyalty would not be tolerated.

Senior county councillors have admitted privately that the Director of the project has been asked to resign.

BLACK GROUPS HIT AT COUNTY COUNCIL

BLACK GROUPS in Nottingham have hit out against attempts by the County Council to impose a community development project on the black community.

The Afro-Caribbean Convention, representing a number of black groups in the city, has written to the Home Office asking them to refuse to fund the scheme until the proper procedures for consultation are carried out.

They quote the Council as admitting that 'as yet no contact has been made with the black communities themselves'. Yet the proposals had been clearly formulated down to the number of workers and their intended roles, and submitted to the Home Office for approval.

The letter also criticises the Community Relations Council, which the County Council *did* consult. The CRC, claims the letter, does not enjoy the confidence or support of local black communities.

The proposal contradicted the CRC's declared policy of urging the County Council to change 'its prevalent practice of deciding projects concerned with ethnic minority groups and then both imposing them upon communities (with never more than token consultations) and also retaining centralised control of their activities'.

The County Council are accused by the Convention of 'lifting' their ideas from a project suggested by a white community group which had been rejected. Their letter asks if the Council 'has nothing better to offer the Afro-Caribbean community than recycled failed ideas?'

It also questions why a project based on developing a multi-racial society should be aimed only at Afro-Caribbean people, since the rest of the



Demonstration in the Old Market Square against the US invasion of Grenada (Photo: Rentasnap).

Basford tenants sue Council for £20,000

For over two years tenants at Basford flats have campaigned to have rents, rates and heating charges reduced on their condemned flats. An average rent is currently £56 per fortnight, including £16 heating charge.

The flats leaked and the heating didn't work properly, yet the Council repeatedly refused compensation even in the face of a mass of evidence gathered by the tenants' association.

Now the Council face a court action. The first test case will be heard

soon and twenty more will follow, depending on the outcome. There could be still more.

The first case is based on a tenant who is claiming damages amounting to £950 for particular items ruined by damp. He is also claiming more general damages for the fact that his 'enjoyment' of the flat was reduced due to the poor conditions.

This claim could involve a figure in the range of £600 to £1,500. It represents a backdated reduction in his rent and heating charges. So a further twenty cases could face the Council with a bill for around £20,000.

Meanwhile, on the 3rd and 4th of November, Basford tenants' demands for nil rates will have been heard at a local Tribunal. The association are appealing for anyone who moved out after 17th August 1982 to contact them so they can benefit from any reductions that are won. Contact: Basford Tenants in Exile, 154 Evans Court, Old Basford.

community have an equal need for multi-racial initiatives.

And it asks how professional local authority workers can set up 'grassroots organisations' as the proposal suggests. Not only is this contradictory, says the letter, it is also arrogant and paternalistic to assume that the black community are either in need of, or will allow, such organisations.

THE TROUBLE WITH RALEIGH - WHO'S ON THEIR BIKE NEXT?

TI RALEIGH, STILL one of Nottingham's biggest employers, is in deep trouble. Despite recent public displays of confidence, its crisis-torn parent company will be examining very closely ways in which it can divest itself of its UK cycle interests over the next two or three years.

Tube Investments is a large multinational which acquired Raleigh in 1960. It has interests in many industries and many countries, with the pattern shifting constantly in response to the need for profits. Inevitably, the costs of this process are borne by the company's employees, as investment in one plant declines or disappears in order to release money for new enterprises.

What is happening in Raleigh now is a direct result of TI's global strategy. Indeed, it is a classic example of the way in which British manufacturing industry has been allowed to decline over several decades.

Raleigh has become less and less important in TI's strategic thinking since 1960. It has come to represent a liability that can no longer be justified in terms of its profit-making potential.

TI has responded in a number of ways, for example:

Investment

Raleigh's decline in market terms over the years has been due to a wide range of factors, including the collapse of overseas markets in countries such as Iran, the rising value of the pound, and the jump in interest rates. However, its difficulty in competing with overseas rivals also reflects a long period of investment starvation.

According to one employee, Raleigh is like 'an extension of the Wollaton Industrial Museum', with some basic plant kept in operation since the factory's opening in the early years of the century. Much of the 63 acre site has been deteriorating for a considerable number of years and many innovations needed to keep Raleigh cycles up to date with competitors have been ignored.

The falling standard of Raleigh cycles was reflected in a loss of faith in



Raleigh by employees and customers alike. This showed up in Raleigh's falling share of the British market - at a crucial time during the late 1970s when interest in cycling was on the increase. In the face of high quality, low cost imports from West Germany, Austria and Italy, Raleigh could no longer claim to be the obvious or even the best choice for British customers.

Exports

In 1960, exports accounted for around 75% of Raleigh's output. As these markets were increasingly threatened by overseas competitors, the response was to acquire or to build new plants in Europe, the USA, India, Canada, South Africa, Nigeria and elsewhere.

Increasingly, production from these plants began to substitute for Nottingham-made exports. Most notoriously, production of 25,000 cycles per year for the lucrative US West Coast market was switched from Nottingham to Taiwanese and Korean plants operating under licence.

Some of these overseas investments proved unfortunate, but most continue to produce a healthy return, relying as they do on cheap labour and proximity to large markets.

In 1980, Raleigh was forced to transfer its overseas assets to TI itself, thus losing its most profitable section. The effect of this can only be to make Raleigh's UK operation look less and less attractive.

Components

The failure to invest in new plant also meant that Raleigh was unable to meet many of its own needs for components. Today, many 'Nottingham-built' Raleigh bikes are assembled almost entirely from overseas components with the exception of the frame and forks: gears from Japan, wheels from France, saddles from Italy ... and so on.

This trend shows every sign of continuing as TI persist in reducing the Nottingham plant to bare essentials in order to release capital for investment elsewhere.

For TI, as for most multinationals, investment strategy is a tightrope between the need to maintain the viability of past investments such as Raleigh, and the need to open up new areas of profit through the acquisition of other firms or the creation of entirely new enterprises.

TI's declared aim since the mid-1970s has been to reduce the UK share of its investments from around 80% to 50%. Obviously this means the closure of UK plants as well as the acquisition of overseas concerns.

Urgency

This is a matter of some urgency for the TI Group, which has consistently suffered from cash problems in recent years and needs to shift its investments from less profitable to more profitable enterprises in a relatively short period of time. But a massive concern such as Raleigh cannot simply be written off overnight, or exchanged for, say, an aircraft components factory in the USA.

Raleigh represents years of cumulative investment, and local management appear to have been successful in persuading the TI board

that short-term profitability can be assured by means of an extremely modest and selective investment programme.

Conditions

The £10 million programme implemented over 1982, which led to the production of a new and quite successful range of cycles, was nonetheless tied to various conditions, including:

- the steady elimination of the components section (Sturmey Archer);
- redundancies among non-production employees, including many of the Research and Development workers whose expertise would be required if Raleigh had any intention of updating its range in the medium term period.

There is no evidence that TI intends to reverse Raleigh's long term decline, because to do so would involve a massive and sustained programme of investment to put the crumbling Nottingham factory back into shape. The TI board has clearly decided that sums of this size should be allocated for new, high-tech investments overseas at the expense of its more traditional UK holdings.

Recent investments in Raleigh merely show that a short term injection of cash is seen as the most effective way of reducing immediate losses, and it would be unwise to feel any confidence in the firm's future under present ownership.

Japanese

It is possible that, having streamlined production to some extent, TI may feel Raleigh will be able to attract a reasonable offer from a new buyer - possibly a Japanese firm with existing cycle manufacturing interests. This may be a means of attracting much needed investment into the factory: it may, however, mean the transfer of production overseas and the complete closure of Raleigh's UK operations.

Without investment from some source, closure or drastic curtailment is probably inevitable within three or four years.

Despite the understandable collapse of morale in the firm, the workforce and trades unions must be prepared in advance for this gloomy future and begin to discuss as a matter of desperate urgency a positive and creative response to TI's corporate strategy.



Part of the Nottingham contingent at the CND demonstration in London on October 22nd (Photo: Rentasnap).



City of
Nottingham

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE

on Equal Opportunities for the
Lesbian and Gay Community
in Nottingham.

To be held on

SATURDAY 3rd DECEMBER 1983 10am - 4.30pm
at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

Creche provided.
Access for the Disabled.

SPONSORED BY NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

GIVE GIRLS A CHANCE



GIRLS 'LOSE OUT'. In schools, youth clubs or any other setting, this becomes increasingly obvious to anyone who works with children.

Girls learn very early on to fade into the background. They let more vociferous and demanding boys claim the lion's share of attention. So we find in all children's activities that much more provision is geared towards demands made by boys.

Workers who have tried to break out of this mould and provide for the unmet needs of girls have often

encountered aggressive attitudes from both boys and male workers. They also have enormous difficulties because of the lack of finance and other resources for the sort of work they would like to do.

Spontaneous

The Nottingham Girls' Project grew out of the spontaneous gathering of women with just such problems. They wanted at first to find support for

their individual projects and help with their current work situations. But, arising out of this gathering, co-ordinated activities independent of the women's workplaces were envisaged such as girls' groups sponsored and financed by the Girls' Project.

This means that many women work on a voluntary basis outside their normal work time to provide a service which they see as essential to girls in Nottingham. This is a sad reflection on Nottingham when many other major towns and cities employ women specifically to work on issues affecting the lives of girls, and with the girls themselves.

However, optimism prevails. An application has been made to the Inner Area Programme for funding for three full-time women youth workers and a secretary to set up the project.

A conference was held in November 1982 for 'Women Working with Young Women'. This attracted women from many walks of life - social work; probation; youth and community; teachers and librarians; women who were concerned to find solutions for girls in trouble, and girls who had opted out of their education and made no demands on the leisure facilities which should be theirs too.

It became clear that if girls were going to benefit from 'equality of opportunity', then separate and specific provision had to be made for them.

Ventures

There have been ventures which have highlighted the kind of need and demand there is for separate provision for girls, such as the 'Girls' Day' held last February to coincide with the Women's Festival.

The event was chiefly planned and staged by a girls' group already formed in Hyson Green. A whole array of resources was available from photography equipment to crazy hair and face paint.

This was a very successful day and brought together girls of different ages and backgrounds from many different parts of the city. What chiefly characterises such events and groups is the relaxed atmosphere and the distances which girls are prepared to travel to participate.

It was so obviously a relief on the 'Girls' Day' for many girls to be themselves away from the critical eye of

the males to whose standards they have been trained to conform.

Arising out of this, other girls' groups have been set up for girls throughout the city who in their words have 'nothing to do'. Girls have been responsible for organising their own appeals for funding and jumble sales. Intermediate Treatment workers have staged a girls' weekend. A skills register has been set up from which groups could find names of women able to share their skills in various fields.

Planning for the second 'Women Working with Young Women' conference is now under way. It will take place on December 10th at Sherwood Community Centre.

Women who are interested in attending, or indeed in any issues arising out of this article, should contact Heather Fitton and Isobel Terry at Nottingham Youth Action, Handel Street, tel. 585111.

If you're still not convinced that we need to think hard about how to give girls better opportunities, ask yourself some questions.

Dependence

How, in the aftermath of Equal Opportunities legislation, do we still create this section of the population that emerges from school ready to accept low paid or no work at all, ready for dependence for the remainder of their lives on the financial allowances made to them at the whim of another, and fully prepared to forsake their social lives for other smaller beings?

How do we bring this section of the population to expect so little? How have we prepared them for such a deprived existence? And what are we doing to put it right?



Backstreet

DEDICATED readers of the *Evenly Gross* will not have missed that 'the whole city's talking about' the proposed revamp to Slab Square.

With the opening of the Royal Centre (interiors courtesy of 'Close Encounters'), Nottingham has become the cultural centre between Beeston and Carlton, attracting thousands of foreign punters, all bulging with burning currency. This they off-load within a quarter mile arc of said cultural centre, namely Debenhams.

To extract even more shekels out of even more jet-setting culture vultures, it seems sensible to invest a mere £1/2 million in giving the Old Market Square a face-lift.

The scheme is a masterpiece of inspired planning that goes far beyond removing traffic, flattening steps and plonking the odd tree around. Instead of two small lame fountains there'll be one big lame fountain and there'll be a really controversial chequer-board crossing for those seeking the sixties touch.

The Council House will become a ruddy great Big Mac, and a 40 foot statue of Robin Hood selling the *Evenly Gross* will drool hungrily from the opposite end. In fact there's talk of remodelling Covent Garden on the same lines.

Of course, £1/2 million might sound like a lot of money, but since the City and County Councils are going dutch - well, it's barely twice as much as their annual expenditure on Housing, Transport, Leisure, Environmental and All Other Services put together. A small price for a shining symbol of the bright, prosperous future Debenhams can look forward to.

LONG SUFFERING owners of a Raleigh bike will soon be able to make the first of many pilgrimages to the TI wailing wall, currently being adorned with murals at their Faraday Road site. It appears TI have finally acknowledged the need for a shrine, where those who have waited years for a spare part or accessory can go and seek solace from their maker.

The mural traces the history of pedalling from bone crusher to double-butted superlight, enabling pilgrims to pinpoint exactly which decade they placed their order in.

Embroidered kneelers are available from the site office for sufferers to grovel in comfort before their allotted spot and wail the night away.

ROCK AND REGGAE fans will be pleased to hear that by December the Royal Concert Hall will have put the finishing touches to what is already proving the ONLY place in town worth seeing live music. Yes, at last Nottingham has a venue where they understand that the best way to enjoy a bopping band is to be sat, rock solid, in a theatre stall.

The design of the RCH has clearly been well researched with a view to staging money-spinning rock concerts. The seats are spacious. Within their four corners the punters can really go wild, provided their rectum never rises.

Flaws in the design concept were however discovered in August, when an element in the audience was seen to stand and jog on the spot. Twelve Group 4 gorillas were immediately employed to patrol the aisles and decapitate anything protruding above a four foot high swing. But this was only a temporary measure.

The RCH are now pleased to announce that by the time The Police are in concert (December 14th), the entire auditorium will be fitted with seat belts.

NOTTINGHAM CENTRE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

66-72 Houndsgate

PRESENT ACTIVITIES

Craft

Starts Tues 1st Nov, 1.30pm. Develop and use a variety of skills. Make Xmas gifts. Follow up courses in requested skills.

Arts Workshop

For beginners. Starts Mon 21st Nov. 11.00-12.00.

Self Help

Starts Tues 22nd Nov. 11.00-12.30. Money advice, heating and keeping warm, welfare rights, and various topics.

Parents & Toddlers

Every Wed 1.00pm. Paints, sand, climbing frame, slide...

History of the Women's Movement

Starts Mon Nov 7th 1.30pm.

Discussion Group

Nov 11th: Housing; 18th: Cooperatives; 25th: Racism; Dec 2nd: Boxing; 9th: Nuclear debate; 16th: Animal welfare.

Children's Play

fighting the ~~new~~ stereotype

FANTASY AND IMAGINATION; creativity; learning to share, to talk to each other; gaining self-confidence; freely exploring ideas; spontaneously expressing curiosity and discovering new interests and skills - children develop in many ways when they play.

They also copy the way they see adults behave; playing at 'make believe', they start to build up their ways of seeing and understanding - play is a very important way of passing on our culture to our children.

However, play has remained a low priority in Nottingham. The Council's attempts at providing play facilities for large numbers of children have been very ad hoc. In response to this, some small local organisations have committed themselves to catering for the urgent needs within their own community.

Pre-school playgroups, adventure playgrounds, play schemes based in community centres and church halls etc. have been effective and exciting and, coupled with other groups such as the play resource centre steering committee and play forum, have all combined to encourage the local authority to look more towards developing a play policy in the county.

In the Hyson Green area, the local tenants' association have persuaded the Council to install purpose-built play equipment in a newly designed play centre in a central area of the flats. An Inner Area Programme Project running for four years now provides funding for two full-time workers and running costs. One of the flats is being converted to provide office and storage space.

The scheme began in June and the summer play scheme ran for six weeks enabling the workers to begin contacting children and residents. Previous provision for this neglected neighbourhood was a good example of statutory effort at its least imaginative, with cruel concrete and colourless structures. All other play areas could only be reached at great risk by crossing busy main roads. The new play apparatus is designed for different age groups. It is robust but colourful and versatile.

The council recently employed two workers for three months starting in August to research into the present play needs of districts of Nottinghamshire. Consultative meetings have been called to create a dialogue between the many agencies involved in play provision.

The findings of this research are still to be published, but it has been confirmed that several play development workers are to be appointed. They will promote play work in Nottingham and work closely with voluntary groups of representatives from all interested sections of the community. Clearer direction for these workers should emerge following a Play Conference on Saturday 22nd October (see separate report on this page).

There is guarded optimism about the effect of this investment by the council. Token gestures are often

grasped as parcels of hope. Children throughout this city are already forced to apply their ingenuity and skills to survival tactics in increasingly unfriendly environments and they have no direct voice of appeal. At times they find indirect means of claiming our attention, but essentially they rely on the capacity of distracted adults to consider their interests and respond to their needs.



NEWSTEAD ABBEY provided a luxurious venue on Saturday 22nd October for a countywide conference on Play. Representatives from play projects throughout the county attended, along with officers and councillors from the City, County and District Councils, in order to determine the most effective forum for developing a coherent play policy in Nottinghamshire.

The County Council outlined their proposal to employ Play Development Workers throughout the county in order to establish links and develop ideas that emerge from the eight districts which make up the county of Nottinghamshire.

John Farmer, representing Fair Play for Children, stated that he was delighted with the new initiative and hoped that other areas might soon follow the lead of Nottinghamshire in developing such a play policy in close consultation with the voluntary sector. He was most encouraged by the day's dialogue and looked forward to seeing positive results in the near future.



ASBESTOS - THE KILLER DUST

Tenants, residents and unions are campaigning in Nottingham to rid the city of the killer dust asbestos. They have formed the
NOTTINGHAM ASBESTOS CAMPAIGN

N.A.C. DEMANDS

- ★ Total ban on all uses & types of asbestos
- ★ Programme of removal of asbestos from our homes
- ★ Finance for removal from central government

7 MYTHS ABOUT ASBESTOS

- White asbestos is safe
NOT TRUE: World authorities agree that all asbestos types are dangerous & should be treated with equal caution
- Asbestos-cement is safe
NOT TRUE: Electron microscopes now show that asbestos-cement releases fibres into the air
- Only high exposures kill
NOT TRUE: There is evidence that low levels of exposure to asbestos dust do kill
- Few die from asbestos disease
NOT TRUE: 5 people will die in Britain every day for the next 30 years from past exposure
- There's no risk to the public
NOT TRUE: There are many asbestos deaths that were not caused by exposure at work
- There are no substitutes
NOT TRUE: Most uses of asbestos now have a suitable alternative - many perform better

ORGANISING ASBESTOS KILLS!

Two years ago few people knew asbestos kills, but today most know that it does. People have been dying of asbestos disease (asbestosis & cancer) in large numbers in Britain for over 100 years, but now the newspapers are reporting horror stories of asbestos incidents that would have been ignored just a couple of years ago. Why is this? Since 'Alice: a Fight for Life' was shown in July 1982, tenants, residents & unions all over the country have organised to outlaw the killer dust. Under this pressure, many Councils now have policies banning the use of asbestos, and programmes to remove existing asbestos products from their property.

In Nottingham we formed the Nottingham Asbestos Campaign in May 1983. The campaign involves several tenants' & residents' groups (including New Highbury Estate Woodthorpe & Winchester Flats, SPARTA, Basford Flats, St. Ann's) and will eventually involve many more. The TGWU are particularly active in the campaign,

support has been given by the local TUC, NUT & NUPE branches and we expect UCATT and ASTMS to be involved very soon.

INTO ACTION

Our first actions are to gain support for the campaign, among tenants, residents & union members, & also from union executives & politicians. This will be done by:

- holding public meetings & encouraging action committees to join NAC.
- arranging educational workshops
- distributing information & publicity
- approaching unions for support
- lobbying local councillors and parties
- establishing a national lobby for government funds for removal.

Events have already forced the Council to act. They set up a Working Party in March to investigate asbestos in Council property. At Bulwell a precedent was set for the immediate removal of blue asbestos, and also for damaged or unsealed white asbestos that is reported to be 'dealt with'. This is clearly not a

ASBESTOS AT BASFORD

On the 4th August 1982, the tenants' associations at Basford Flats and Balloon Wood wrote to Mr. Oscroft (Director of Housing) about our fears of the dangers of the asbestos panels in the heating system of our flats. We were promised a report, but in November we were still waiting.

Meanwhile, we had sent off samples to be analysed independently: the panels contained brown and white asbestos. We also commissioned a report by the EHO of SHELTER, which stated:

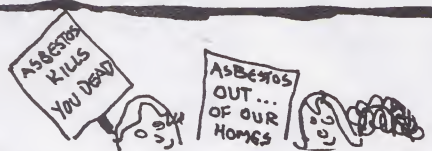
'The premises (i.e. the whole estate) are a statutory nuisance under section 92 (1) (a) of the Public Health Act 1936 in respect of (a) Asbestos....'

So, in November, we exposed the delays in the press. The Council's

response was immediate: air tests were done & the results were known in December. We rejected the conclusion that they showed the flats to be safe. In reply we presented our own demands for action:

- complete inspection of all flats
- damaged or unsealed panels to be removed
- consultation with BFTA & BWTAG

The Council refused all demands. Now the flats are to be demolished, & they still refuse to listen to our warnings. There are few tenants left at Basford now - other groups must take the responsibility of forcing the Council to act to rid us of this killer dust.



"The evil effects of asbestos dust have also attracted my attention. A microscopic examination of this mineral dust which was made by HM Medical Inspector clearly revealed the sharp, glass-like, jagged nature of the particles, and where they are allowed to rise and remain suspended in the air of a room, in any quantity, the effects have been found to be injurious, as might have been expected.

Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1898.

"We wish to point out that we also recommend that, in view of the fact that all forms of asbestos (including white asbestos) can cause cancer, the use of all asbestos should be curtailed as safer and more effective substitutes become available..."

Acheson & Gardner: 'Asbestos' (Report to HSE, 1983)

satisfactory policy. We are still demanding alongside the local action groups:

- a leaflet to be distributed, as agreed in writing
- a complete inspection of all houses on the estate
- damaged or unsealed asbestos to be removed

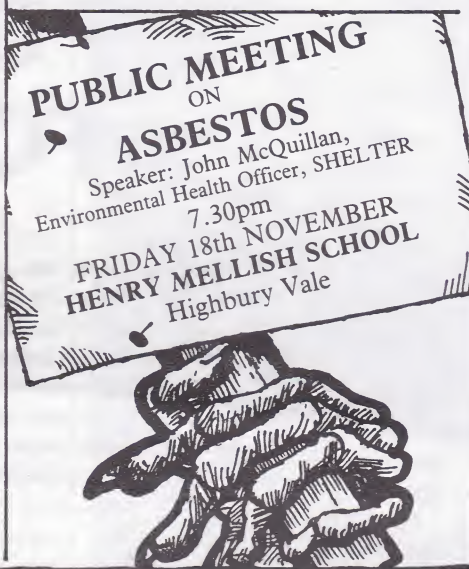
On the demolition of Basford and Balloon Wood flats, we say it is folly to take the lowest price for demolition including asbestos removal as the Council proposes to do! Asbestos removal must be priced separately and the contract awarded on safety considerations.

GOVERNMENT'S REPLY

New Highbury Estate approached Ian Gow, Minister of Housing, through their local M.P., for funds to allow the Council to remove asbestos from both Council and owner-occupiers' homes. In reply, he states that 75% of the cost can be borrowed by the Council (the rest comes out of our rent) but only if the Government agree it! If they don't the Council must find all the money from rent

& rate receipts.

This is not acceptable. NAC says that the government were largely responsible for allowing asbestos to be used on a national scale, and they should make money available in the form of grants to finance a programme of removal.



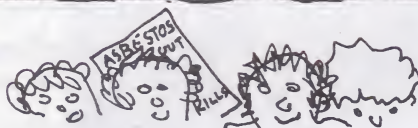
BLUE FOUND AT BULWELL

During the summer John and Margaret Peck succeeded after persistent efforts in having the materials of their heating unit analysed for asbestos. The doors of the heating unit were found to be lined with material containing asbestos, and they were removed within days and replaced by asbestos-free doors. The panels inside were found to contain white asbestos. The Council would take no action on this, pending the Working Party report.

The day after the doors were removed a snap meeting was called outdoors. 70 people came and an action committee formed including tenants and owner-occupiers. Three weeks later an indoor meeting was held with over a hundred

there, quite a lively meeting, with the MP & two councillors questioned sharply.

Since then the heating unit doors of the 102 rented 3-bedroomed houses have been removed. The Council refuses to accept any responsibility for the 76 owner-occupied houses. No steps at all have been taken regarding the material containing white asbestos. Over 60 tenants have now sent in letters asking that panels that have been damaged be removed, as was promised would be done at Bulwell Tenants' Consultation Committee. The action committee is also continuing to back owner-occupiers in their demands for asbestos to be removed.



STOP PRESS

The Working Party Report, which has been kept secret since August, was discussed at the Health and Safety Committee on the 20th October. It is now due to be considered by the council in committees during November and December, over fifteen months after asbestos was first reported at Basford and Balloon Wood flats.

This report will probably form the basis of council policy. It is important for all council tenants and workers in Nottingham. NAC is holding a public meeting on 18th November to discuss our demands and answer your questions. COME ALONG.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT ASBESTOS?

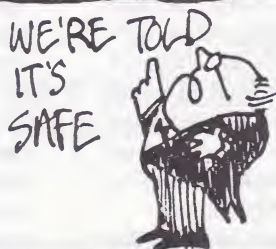
- ★ Involve your union at work or your tenants' association on your estate. Form a group.
- ★ Find out where the asbestos is. Do you work or live with it? Demand a survey.
- ★ Find out more about asbestos. Contact NAC, get a Fact Pack, come to a meeting.
- ★ Join with us in campaigning for an asbestos-free city, at work and home.

**National Conference
November 19th**

Publications:

- Fact Pack on Asbestos all you need to know
 - Asbestos: A Tenants Charter a plan for action
- both: 50p to groups, £1 to others, post & packing extra

For help & advice, contact:
Nottingham Asbestos Campaign
154 Evans Court, Old Basford.
Tel: 287519 (evening)



THE VOCAL LOBBY FOR the lower police ranks in Nottinghamshire has given its full support to the police officers who fired fourteen bullets at Stephen Waldorf in Kensington last January. They had been acting in 'a difficult situation', claimed Notts. Police Federation chair Ron Nightingale after the acquittal of two Metropolitan police detective constables last month.

DC Peter Finch had fired without warning on a Mini waiting at traffic lights, emptying a .38 Smith and Wesson into the driver and pistol-whipping him from shoulder height as he lay on the car's floor. Finch's colleague, DC John Jardine, later admitted he had tried to kill his target on hearing shots but considered this was justified. Judge Croom-Johnson agreed and made his wish for an acquittal clear to the jury.

Elite squads

Last year in Britain there were about 7,000 issues of firearms to police, not including those to the various elite squads. Ron Nightingale has claimed that he does not know the current figures for Nottinghamshire, and most details are also withheld by Chief Constable Charles McLachlan. However, police annual reports for Notts. show that as long ago as 1976 there were twenty-five occasions on which guns were issued to police for possible use in their work. Twenty-four of these cases were apparently groundless; the twenty-fifth was the arrest of 'a criminal known to carry arms'. More recent figures on gun issues have been suppressed, but the national average for forces outside London works out at about one occurrence every nine days.

Statistics on the handout of police firearms exclude the regularly armed Special Branch, which has nineteen officers around the county.

Besides the Special Branch, all of the Special Operations Unit (the local SPG) are also firearms-trained and are deployed on 24-hour standby as the main firearms tactical team. (Notts. is also believed to have a separate crack firearms unit, likened to Leicestershire's TFO and to a similar squad in Lincolnshire).

SOU handling of guns is not restricted to training sessions. According to anti-racists prosecuted last year for painting out National Front graffiti in Beeston, the SOU members arresting them had revolvers. Normal statistical practice excludes routine issues such as this. There are currently about forty officers in the SOU who are trained to use both revolvers and shotguns and also include in their ranks a number of rifle marksmen.

Sealed box

There is a third group of police in Nottinghamshire which is regularly armed. In March 1979, Notts. became one of the first forces in Britain to issue traffic police with guns. The initial training covered twelve drivers (although there were allegations that twenty were involved in north Notts. alone). At least one patrol car always has weapons and ammunition in a sealed box which can be opened on making a radio call. The main route concerned is said to be between the traffic bases in Nottingham and Ollerton.

Nottinghamshire police keeps mum not only on the handout of guns but also on training with them, and

GUN LAW IN NOTTS - OUR PISTOL PACKING POLICE FORCE

information has to be collected carefully to obtain even a part of the picture. It was only on the matter of training - not issue or possession - that PC Nightingale was prepared to give figures last month to Radio Nottingham after the Finch/Jardine acquittals, and that was merely to say that *nationally*, about one in ten police are gun trained. PC Nightingale conveniently omitted to add that *locally*, police training in gun use has been far more extensive than this (one in four), and surpasses even the Met. itself.

Refresher courses

Indeed, the police in this county appear to be the most firearm-prepared force in England and Wales, and nationally are second only to Scotland's Northern Constabulary. In 1976, 567 officers (about 27% of the Notts. force) passed through the quarterly firearms refresher courses at RAFs Newton and Syerston. 379 of these were constables, 158 were sergeants, 26 were chief inspectors and 4 were chief inspectors. The proportion trained - 27% - is much higher than the next three in the league table: the Met. (17%), Humberside (15%) and South Yorkshire (12%) - and it explains PC Nightingale's preference for quoting national figures in a local interview.

The high figure for Humberside reflects the influence of Mr McLachlan in his days there, in what was then the Lincolnshire Constabulary, as a senior officer overseeing firearms policy. As well as undertaking a massive building programme of new HQs and extending computerisation, McLachlan was keen on internal security programmes against public disorders, and upset the locals when he sealed off the Deeping St Nicholas area for a military-style romp.

In Nottinghamshire there is also a fourth unit which is often armed - the Regional Crime Squad (which, despite its name, also performs drugs and political work). There are about 130 CID seconded from six forces to this group, known in police circles as 'the heavy gang'. The RCS covers an area from the coast to West Yorkshire (its base) and Derbyshire. There are about thirty of them covering



Nottinghamshire. They used to operate from an anonymous building in Kimberley, but moved last year to Force HQ in Arnold.

The function of this body is 'criminal intelligence', which was the job of the C11 unit which shot Stephen Waldorf. This involves target surveillance (tracking and harassing selected individuals), collection of pub gossip, running informers, observation work, assistance in major incidents, and processing and analysing the data amassed for entry into the 90,000 files on Notts. citizens. Notts. police annual reports are highly secretive about the RCS and barely mention its existence at all; certainly not in connection with raids, arrests or the issue of firearms, and it is not known whether RCS personnel have ever drawn a gun 'in anger'.

Riot-trained

Most of the other Notts. officers who have undergone arms training are assigned to Police Support Units (groups of thirty-six ordinary officers attached to a particular police division), which are riot-trained formations held in reserve for a national emergency. Arms training in this context involves sufficiently large numbers of police as not to relate to the peacetime use of arms, and does not present risk of Waldorf-style outrages in normal times. Arms training here is related solely to the possibility under civil defence requirements of having to hold down an insubordinate populace in extreme circumstances. The majority of the remaining Notts. arms-trained officers would not expect to put that training to use in their actual work, unlike the special squads.

If there is virtually no information on the issue of firearms, the greatest secrecy is reserved for details about what stocks are possessed. The standard issue is the Smith and Wesson .38, but some forces also possess Remington pump action shotguns, Keckler & Koch rifles, sub-machine guns or the L39 rifle banned by the New York police (it can penetrate brick walls and still kill innocent bystanders).

Apart from plastic bullets and CS gas, the last time police weaponry was discussed by the Notts. police authority was sixteen years ago in 1967 when, after excluding the press and public, it approved the purchase of .303 rifles and .38 ammunition. Similarly, over two decades in which CS gas has been stockpiled in the county, possession of the canisters was never discussed by the police authority until the debate on plastic bullets which arose after the 1981 riots. On that occasion, a passing remark by the chief constable that CS had already been stocked for about twenty years was the first official statement on this subject, which over the corresponding period had been omitted from successive police annual reports. The remark was received by the police authority without questions or objections.

Accidental

The authority did inspect the force armoury a while ago but has been silent about its findings. In practical terms, apart from the odd circular from the Home Office, the police have virtually a free hand in their activities and are subjected to no external challenges. It was only through the accidental discovery of an invoice for 500 plastic bullets already purchased by Notts. police that moves were able to take place to cancel their purchase in 1982.

Training introducing most officers to firearms is understood to involve a five day induction course. Those passing this are then refreshed every three months by shorter courses lasting one day, led by officers who have undergone a six week firearms teaching course. The sessions used to take place at military camps like RAFs Newton and Syerston and ATC Beckingham but such is Mr McLachlan's obsession with guns that the Notts. force now has its own rifle range. This is part of the multi-million pound police HQ complex at Arnold which took about three years to build.

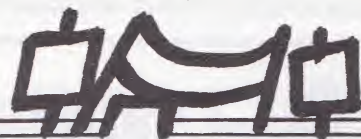
What use is all this training put to? Secrecy is even worse on police operations than on the details of arms training. Most well known, because of the publicity that resulted, was the opportunity that the Special Branch took last November after the break-in at Ruddington arms depôt to visit some left-wing targets. These 'fishing expedition' type raids don't result in charges - that doesn't appear to be their intention. The target in this case woke up to the sight of several guns pointing at his head.

Spectacular

More spectacular was a raid in October 1978 (again without charges resulting) on anarchists by thirty police carrying handguns, shotguns and even riot sticks. On answering the door at six a.m., the target's father was forced against the wall. The detainees, half-naked, were handcuffed behind their backs and driven to Beeston police station.

What, asked one of them later, would have happened if after hearing the commotion in the hall they had lashed out with a knife at hand at their flak-jacketed bedroom intruders in the instant before identifying them? 'You'd be dead, both of you,' was the reply, which went on to hint at what good publicity it would have been. Another

(continued on the next page)



Women should sign on, says jobless centre

WOMEN IN NOTTINGHAM are being encouraged to sign on. A campaign launched by the Centre for the Unemployed and the Nottinghamshire Welfare Rights Service hopes to reach women of all ages who don't realise that they are eligible to register - and could therefore be entitled to up to £25 a week, plus the pension advantages of National Insurance contributions.

The results of a survey carried out during the Nottingham Women's Festival last year showed positively that the Government doesn't have a true picture of the problems of women's unemployment.

One of the biggest problems is making sure women themselves realise that they have a right to sign on. Many don't see themselves as unemployed,

others feel there is no point as they will not receive any money because their husbands are already signing on or are employed.

The actual act of signing on, particularly for the first time, can be intimidating and difficult, especially if you have young children.

The offices can be drear, the queues are long and at the end of it all you have to fill in a form which can seem quite daunting.

You have to say you are available for work, but you might feel that you cannot answer 'Yes' to the question which asks 'Would you take on a full-time job which you can do?' The law does allow you to place reasonable restrictions on the hours you can work and the distance you will travel, but it is best to keep your options open and make yourself available for full-time work.

Information and advice about the advantages of registration are available from the Nottingham Centre for the Unemployed, 66-72 Houndsgate as well as from Job Centres.

One of the great advantages of being registered which is often forgotten is that you can go on many education and training courses. This not only makes unemployment more enjoyable, but can also open up other job opportunities. Many sports and entertainments are free or at a reduced rate and CVS 33 Mansfield Road have produced an Unemployment Leisure Handbook which gives details of local facilities.

Remember - you can take a friend with you to the Unemployment Benefit Office or Job Centre, and the Centre for the Unemployed has a creche. It is certainly worth the effort of going down to have a chat.

Third World cups

THE NOTTINGHAM TEA and Coffee Campaign has been set up to improve sales of brands which return more profit to the producers.

The multinationals have a strong hold on the tea and coffee markets, but for the last few years alternatives have been available. Instead of Nestlé, Brooke Bond and the other instant brands, there is Campaign Coffee, now marketed by Traidcraft, who have also launched ground coffee and tea.

In the past, it was difficult finding people in Nottingham who sold the Traidcraft brands and supplies were occasionally erratic. Now the Nottingham Tea and Coffee Campaign has been formed, the aim is that more of the price gets back to the producers. With tea and tea bags, 10% of the price goes to welfare services for the estates in Sri Lanka, in addition to what they would usually get.

The ground and instant coffee is bought from Nicaragua and Tanzania, where the socialist governments give the workers a better deal. And because Traidcraft does not pay a dividend to shareholders, any profits are reinvested in alternative marketing, which also includes crafts and wholefoods.



Multinationals spend millions of pounds on advertising to get their name into people's homes. Alternative groups cannot do this and people are loath to try unknown brands without a personal recommendation. Consequently, the Nottingham Campaign is particularly keen to find more individuals to distribute to their friends.

The Campaign can provide publicity leaflets, stocks for resale and speakers for meetings. For further details, contact Heather Chambers at Earthwise (the Environmental Information Centre), 15 Goose Gate (tel. 582561).

As well as Earthwise, Traidcraft tea and coffee is sold in the Nottingham area by Green Pastures (379 Aspley Lane), Ouroboros (37 Mansfield Road), Mapperley Books (21A Plains Road) and a number of individuals.

(GUN LAW continued)

commented, 'If I do a five day week, I will carry a gun on three of them.'

If such police behaviour is acceptable and necessary, it is none too clear why references to it need to be absent from police annual reports when there is so much space for police-community sports promotions and the like.

Mr Geoffrey Dear, a former assistant chief constable of Notts. in charge of its firearms department in 1979, is now at the Met. He commented last month that there had been 'surprise' in police circles at the bringing of charges against Finch and Jardine for Waldorf's shooting. He described some national press reports on the number of police authorised to carry guns as 'good emotive stuff to

sell newspapers', and, whilst expressing 'regret' on behalf of the Met., saw no need to revise rules and regulations relating to police use of firearms.

The absence of remorse for Stephen Waldorf's near-killing is in keeping with police indifference to their other shooting victims - hostage Gail Kinchin and seven others in the last decade. Under current police attitudes, it is now only a matter of time before the first maiming by police firearm occurs in Nottinghamshire. Perhaps the moment has come not to introduce the legal immunity for officers demanded by Federation militants, but to withdraw the existing financial immunity. Under this, ratepayers cough up undisclosed damages bills for the misbehaviour of police individuals.

Nottingham Centre for the Unemployed

ALLEGATIONS & FACTS

BY CHRIS PRESTON,
SECRETARY - NOTTINGHAM & DISTRICT TUC

IT'S NO SURPRISE that the Evening Post has joined some local politicians in a concerted attack on the Centre for the Unemployed. If this paper, and certain Tory County Councillors, gave as much attention to the causes of mass unemployment as to knocking those trying to do something about it, then perhaps unemployment might not be so great - in this city, one in four under-25s is out of work.

Anti-union

Of course the Post has been consistently anti-trade union. It has been in dispute with the print unions for the last ten years. The NUJ and NGA remain in active dispute with the paper. Examples of what the Post has said, or quoted others as saying, include: 'The Centre is party political', 'takes coach loads to demonstrations', 'has nobody using it'.

The facts are that the staff in the first year were active members of NUPE, which was directly involved in the seven month health dispute. Yes, NUPE as a union organised buses for national demonstrations, and staff exercised their right to support this. Yes, the users of the Centre actively campaign on unemployment - this is their right. The Users Group, though sporadic, has many joining in its activities, with hundreds over the months coming to the Centre for advice, education classes, leisure activities, debates on a whole range of issues, and so on.

Unemployment is, of course, a political issue. The Centre is, however, not party political, in that if any government in power existed on policies that needed over four million jobless, then there would be a need for the Centre.

It has been alleged that the Centre is 'overstaffed and overpaid'.

Nine staff have left after the first year. All would agree they were overworked, many under tremendous pressure. Two had long-term illnesses, and various aspects of the Centre's work

suffered. This in itself suggests there was no slack for other workers to take up.

The high wages allegation is also a joke. In this second year of operation, combining part-time and full-time workers, the Centre is held to a £60 average wage. Could some of the local politicians who have attacked the Centre exist on this wage?

It has also been alleged that 'no financial support comes from the Trade Unions'.

In the first year, trade union branches in Nottingham contributed



over £1,500 towards the running costs of the Centre, with several thousands more going to regional funds for the capital expenditure of a number of different centres. Many Labour Party branches also gave cash.

During this year, trade union branches, factories and work places found a further £1,000 to finance the People's March for Jobs. And, as well as cash, many Trade Union offices donated equipment and facilities without which the Centre could not have functioned.

Come on Evening Post! Let's see you print some facts! Let's also have it stated that no money as yet has come from Conservative Associations. As for receipt of money from Labour Party branches - is it they who make the Centre party political, or is it the

Conservatives who choose *not* to contribute?

To critics of the Centre, and supporters of this government (by definition supporters of four million on the dole), I say: Can you tell the unemployed what you are doing to help them? Explain to 3,900 September 1983 school leavers in the county why they are without a job. Explain to 4,600 on £25 a week with YTS or YOP or some other training scheme (i.e. with no real, secure job) why they cannot find real work.

How dare a leading Conservative county councillor state that the Council is 'pouring money down the drain by assisting the Centre'. Regardless of the amount (£5,000 from a budget of several millions), the fact that the City and County Councils, and the Trades Union Council, are playing a part locally means they recognise unemployment and take some responsibility.

Those who want to withdraw support, and close the Centre, presumably want the unemployed to go away. They do not want them to have somewhere to meet, talk, campaign, maintain self-respect, receive welfare rights advice and take part in education classes. They do not want the children of the unemployed to go on summer outings to the seaside.

They want to end the welfare rights groups set up by the Centre in Broxtowe, St Ann's and Clifton, to remove support from the unemployed basketball, football and pool teams, to take away the venue where bands can practise at night, etc. etc.

Public gaze

In other words, our vocal critics do not want to end unemployment - they want to push it under the carpet away from public gaze.

I ask those who have heard these critics to acquaint themselves with the facts. Visit the Centre, whether you are in work or not. Talk to the staff and unemployed users. Involve yourself in the problems of today. Unless you do, we will not build a better tomorrow.

Help the Centre by writing to or lobbying your councillors, telling them of your support. Write to your MP and the government condemning the policies which have caused mass unemployment:

**MAKE FULL EMPLOYMENT A
FIRST PRIORITY!**



FEMINIST ARTS GROUP NOTTINGHAM

THE NOTTINGHAM FEMINIST Arts Group is a non-hierarchical group, consisting at the moment of approximately twenty women. The group primarily grew (and is still growing) out of a shared response of dissatisfaction with the male-dominated art tradition which we are confronted with and yet feel alien to - both in and out of Art Institutions.

Women who found themselves conflicting with 'mainstream' art practices discussed their invisible and subordinate positions within the system, and so began to form an alternative support structure between themselves.

Our ways of working vary according to personal preference; encompassing the mediums of oil-painting, watercolours, sculpture, photography, printmaking, textiles, writing and performance art; and some of us choose to work in Mixed Media.

We also vary according to our ages and backgrounds/training:- whereas some of us are still at college or have recently graduated, others are teaching or involved with other ways of supporting themselves. Some of us are unemployed. However, what ever else we are involved with, we are also making a space in our own lives for producing art with a feminist bias.

As Feminists, we are a group of women who vary in our levels of political involvement and commitments, according to our individual positions. However, we would all agree that we are a left-wing political organisation and align ourselves also with the Peace Movement and other radical and sexual minorities in our existing society. We maintain links with Trent Polytechnic, the Women's Peace Movement, the Labour Party, the Campaign for Racial Equality, and the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, and are constantly in the process of making contact with other political bodies, and aim to build a regular correspondence with other women's groups.

As a supporting group, we operate on many levels. Fundamentally we offer women a space away from the

pressures, interference and limitations that we have experienced in a male-dominated climate, so that we can express, discuss and share the problems which we all confront when trying to be authentic and assert our own views of the world.

Our first two exhibitions were held in Nottingham as part of the Nottingham Women's Festival in 1982 and 1983, and we are now receiving financial assistance from East Midlands Arts. At the moment we are touring a small exhibition of our work called "Visible Women" which has been to York Arts Centre and the Women's Photography Gallery in Leeds and are planning a larger exhibition for the Blackfriars Arts Centre, Boston, Lincolnshire, from the 12th of February to the 3rd of March, entitled "The Virgin, the Witch and the Wardrobe", in which the work will explore existing attitudes and concepts on women's sexuality and its surrounding silence, myths, secrets, contradictions, stereotypes etc. etc....

We shall also be working towards exhibiting pieces to coincide with the Nottingham Women's Festival in March, and organising a 'Women's Art Change' Conference at around the same time.

This will be an open meeting, with a special emphasis on the position of women in Art Education - both students and teachers. There will be women coming from colleges in town and cities all over the country.

Our own meetings are usually held once, or sometimes twice, a month. Here, we can feel free to show and discuss our work in an informal atmosphere. We also plan to invite other women artists from other parts of the country to speak to us, and arrange times when we can attend exhibitions or other events of particular interest to the group.

We would welcome all women to our meetings or on to our mailing list.

For further information, contact: 'Visible Women' (Nottingham Feminist Arts Group) - Liz Churton, 75 Lenton Boulevard, Lenton, or 'The Works', 42-48 Carrington Street, Nottingham. Tel. 586183.

Food

FEED FOUR for a fiver? Impossible at lunch time in the city? Not if you go to the Falcon Inn at Canning Circus.

For only 70p you can get an enormous jacket-baked potato, smothered in cheese and accompanied by a generous side-salad. Fish and chips (real chips, not reconstituted 'Fries') served with a vegetable of your choice is a mere £1.10 or you could opt for home-made cottage pie, stew or a variety of other equally delicious-looking dishes all for about £1.

I was profligate and chose a Ploughman's lunch. For £1.25 I was given a huge chunk of french bread, lashings of butter and pickle, a large mixed salad and a piece of Stilton that I just couldn't manage. I ate about a third of it, wrapped the rest in my serviette and took it home. It weighed over four ounces.

The only disadvantage of the Falcon is the number of people who have discovered the excellent value of its pub grub - so get there early!

NOTTINGHAM & DISTRICT TRADES UNION COUNCIL



1890

Nottingham & District TUC has existed since 1890. 160 union branches are affiliated. If your Union is affiliated nationally to the TUC, your branch can and should be affiliated to the Trades Union Council. (It does not cost a lot to join - but once in we demand a lot.) All enquiries to the Secretary: Chris Preston, 12 Emmanuel Ave, Nottingham NG3 6MF.

THE WELL OF LONELINESS by Radcliffe Hall. Virago £3.50.

Asking a gay woman if she's read Radcliffe Hall is a bit like asking a vicar if he's read the Bible. It's a dramatic, beautiful and moving book about gay women in the early part of the 20th century. However, it's where your understanding starts not finishes, since it firmly explains lesbianism in terms of the traditional butch/femme stereotype rather than any more radical attempt to avoid the pitfalls of straight relationships.

Nevertheless it's a fabulous book. If you've never read it - get your hanky out and prepare for a little heart rending. If you have read it - why not look at it again and reflect on how much, or how little, has changed and how oppression can be internal as well as external.

Karen Buckley

GOOD FRIENDS JUST by Ann Leaman. Chatto £3.50.

'Good Friends Just' is a very funny book. By exaggerating relationships to create an impossible situation it makes some neat points about life in general.

The central character, Maddy, is a gay woman hopelessly infatuated with the looks of a friend with a penchant for heterosexual affairs straight out of a Mills and Boone novelette. Put them, with two equally unlikely women friends, in a foreign culture (i.e. Turkey) and settle for a very enjoyable read.

Karen Buckley

THE BATTLE FOR BERMONDSEY by PETER TATCHELL. Heretic Books. Due out November.

Few people can claim not to have heard of Peter Tatchell. From November 1981 to February 1983, the name and face appeared in every newspaper in the country - the militant, homosexual, Australian draft dodger who sought to undermine the Great British tradition of parliamentary democracy. Tatchell was, to the media, the 'loony left' personified. He became that contemporary political folk devil which seeks power at the cost of democracy, obedience at the cost of truth, and socialism at the cost of liberty.

'The Battle for Bermondsey' is, to coin a phrase, Peter Tatchell's own story of the real manoeuvrings and deception which led up to the

THE BOOKS PAGE is edited by Mushroom Bookshop collective and intends to cover important new books, local books - anything exciting in print. Please get in touch if you have any ideas.

This issue, the page is devoted to gay books, and most the reviews have been written by our friends on the GEM collective (Gay East Midlands - the local monthly gay paper).

Gay publishing - despite the collapse of Gay News - is flourishing. Gay Men's Press and the new Brilliance books both have a thriving list and most leading publishers are bringing out gay books.

'A Boy's Own Story', reviewed below, has reached and stayed in the national top ten best-selling paperbacks and, together with 'The Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse', has brought gay writing to the shelves of most bookshops.

'The Bookseller', the book-trade magazine, recently said the the eighties would be the decade of the gay novel.

Bermondsey by-election. It lists the fabrications and lies of a hostile media, and the dirty deeds of a host of opponents, from union leaders, right-wing Party members, and the Labour leadership, through to the soft and not so soft left within the Party. The more traditional opponents of Labour, from big business, the intelligence services and the Tories, through to the Liberals, all play their role.

This book is more than just an account of one local by-election. Change the names and the scenario fits, just as easily, into Nottingham or countless other local parties. 'The Battle for Bermondsey' documents but a small part of the wider struggle for real democracy within the Labour Party and the country as a whole.

Colin Clews

A BOY'S OWN STORY by Edmund White. Picador. £2.50.

This is a novel about a young gay man in his early teens growing up in a well-to-do family in America in the 50s. It is written in the first person, from the perspective of an older man looking back on his youth, I've no idea how 'autobiographical' it is, not that that really matters in any case: it's a novel, and must stand as such.

If you're expecting fast-moving action, then this isn't the book for you. It's not that nothing happens: if you count up the sexual incidents alone they make quite a hefty list. Centrally, though, the book is not about action; it's about scenes, moods and feelings. It is about what goes on within the main character that is at the heart of the book, not what he does. Edmund White gives us a constant counterpoint of emotion, and description, the one reflecting the other, with metaphor and imagery acting as bridge between the two.

White's use of language is studied, careful, precise without being precious. Though he has obviously searched for the exactly right word, there is no sense that it is laboured, that he is seeking our admiration for his verbal skills. It's rather that, like a painter building up a painting brush-stroke by brush-stroke, White uses each word, each phrase, each image, to build up a pattern of mood and tone. This book is compared with *Catcher in the Rye*; I don't know why, except both are about young men.

The comparison that came into my mind is with Virginia Woolf: they have the same interest primarily in what is going on in people's hearts and minds, and the same use of the physical details of the outside world to illustrate the inner world.

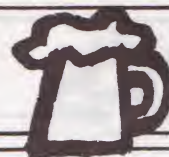
Jonathan Walters

(A longer version of this review first appeared in *Outrage*.)

THE ADVOCATE GUIDE TO GAY HEALTH by R.D.FENWICK. Alyson Publications. £3.75.

At long last, a health book with a difference. This is one of the few books to recognise the fact that gay people sometimes have special health problems and that they deserve just as much attention as non-gays. 'Health', in this case, covers more than an apple a day. The Advocate Gay Health Guide looks beyond the treatment of diseases like syphilis, herpes and venereal warts to offer sound advice for the physical and mental well-being of the average lesbian or gay man, on the basis that prevention is better than cure. Given that the greater majority of health services are geared up for the maintenance of heterosexuals (and heterosexuality), it's nice to find at least one sympathetic reference point.

Colin Clews



Brideshead retreaded



NO SUB-CULTURE kiddies with finger-in-the-lightsocket hairdoes here. Nottingham University's social life retains a certain red-necked squareness which we may label 'reactionary chic', and duffel coats and college scarves are still depressingly popular.

Besides, tonight's jaunt enters the innermost sanctum of student respectability: the all-male hall. At least two of these dinosaurs remain, a world of three meals a day and don't walk on the grass (there IS only one kind of grass at Nottingham University).

So how exactly do two hundred ex-public school head boys get their kicks at a good old-fashioned student hop?

First of all, the decor: a neo-classical stone barn with acoustics to match - pure Brideshead retreaded. Not bad perhaps for a candle-lit dress-suit dinner, but as a funky disco bar forget it.

And don't try crashing the door here - it's considered good form to beat up freeloaders, especially if they're oiks. Anyway, they all play rugby and

sport a nice line in t-shirt slogans (this year's tip for the top seems to be 'Zap 'Em Till They Glow').

Not that the punters are likely to mind. First names are superfluous here, and in any case Simon or Howard seem to cover about two-thirds of the clientele.

If you want to look inconspicuous, then the dependable combat jacket, wranglers and trainers topped off with a 'My Parents Went To' sweatshirt should see you through. Skip the bondage trousers and hair-dye - they'll only laugh.

If you're really feeling confident, a Fyffe Robertson hat plus Barbour coat and a copy of 'Horse and Hounds' will get you discreetly noticed. But best not risk aping the Sebastian lookalikes unless your daddy's got a big BMW and a gite in the Camargue too.

Musical sophistication isn't exactly a celebrated feature of these occasions. It's still considered smart to know the words to ABC, and in general the fodder is nice bland unchallenging pap-

music. It helps to know the local dance: a sort of shouderly macho waddle whilst drying your back with an imaginary bath towel.

This is a fairly universal step, applicable to any song in two or four time, but don't expect too much competition (why is it that most maths. students display an almost total lack of rhythm?).

Don't stay too late unless you like Brown Sugar and Hi Ho Silver Lining. Mining engineers are notorious bigots when they're not being sick, and after 11 p.m. no-one with a CND badge is entirely safe.

In fact, this is hardly the first place you'd look for a progressive evening's entertainment. However, as a sixth-form party for people who'd rather not grow up any more, it takes some beating.

Bad night out rating ★★★

(Don't bother unless you're a sexual stereotype.)

